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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a pilot course combining the communication capstone with service learning. It first looks at faculty rationale and expectations for the course, then describes how the course was constructed. It then summarizes the students' expectations for the course. The next section gives the perspective of both the instructor and the students on their experiences of the course. Finally, it makes some tentative conclusions about the success of the service-learning project. Both sections explaining the students' perspectives were written by a student who is currently enrolled in the class. (Contains 10 references and the course syllabus.) (Author/RS)

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ED 444 199

INTEGRATING SERVICE LEARNING INTO THE COMMUNICATION CAPSTONE COURSE

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CS510 377

H.F. Glaser

Abstract

This paper describes a pilot course combining the communication capstone with service learning. It first looks at faculty rationale and expectations for the course, then describes how the course was constructed. It then summarizes the students' expectations for the course. The next section gives the perspective of both the instructor and the students on their experiences of the course. Finally, it makes some tentative conclusions about the success of the service-learning project. Both sections explaining the students' perspectives were written by a student who is currently enrolled in the class.

> "The purpose of disciplinary capstone projects is to integrate students' cumulative knowledge in a specific discipline and demonstrate that integration through a project. When combined with service-learning, such capstone projects can be outstanding learning experiences." (Enos and Troppe, 1996, p. 173).

Faculty rationale and expectations for the capstone course.

The department of communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha is currently experimenting with integrating service learning into the capstone course. Our impetus to focus the capstone on a service learning project grew from the faculty's desire to give graduating students a culminating educational experience. We defined what we wanted from a capstone course, and thought that a service-learning project might give the students a focal activity through which to realize those goals. The university administration had been emphasizing service-learning as an appropriate tool for our metropolitan university courses, so its availability was quite salient as we were discussing the capstone. This paper gives the perspectives of the instructor and a graduating student enrolled in the class of how service learning integrates into the communication capstone course.

The definition of service-learning we are using comes from the recent edited volume in communication studies:

> Service-learning is a method in which students learn and develop through community service that: 1) is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; 2) helps foster civic responsiblity; 3) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and 4) includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience (Souza, 1999).

The faculty on the curriculum committee primarily wanted a capstone course to:

1) help the students integrate what appears to be a fragmented department and discipline by exposing them to the different strands of the communication field and exploring their common features;
2) give the students an overview of the communication field while also allowing them to explore a particular issue in-depth;
3) give the students an opportunity to apply their education and communication theory;
4) and provide a mechanism to assess our students' abilities upon graduation.

One of the main problems the faculty saw with our program is the students' narrow focus on a particular communication discipline gives them a limited perception of the wider field. Students may major in speech communication (interpersonal, organizational, rhetoric) or mass communication (journalism, public relations/advertising, news writing, broadcast journalism) so that a broadcast journalism major, for instance, may have little understanding of its relationship to rhetoric.

In addition, upon graduation we expect our students to understand the relationship between theory and application, be able to apply their communication discipline, be prepared for work or graduate school, be competent in oral and written skills, and be self-directive.

Service-learning appeared to be an appropriate way to attain our goals for the capstone course in that it encourages students to integrate diverse bodies of knowledge (Seiler, 1998), integrate observations with research, and "formulate concepts and questions to deepen the learner's understanding of the world and the root causes of the need for service" (Jacob, 1996, p. 10.). Many of the goals of capstone courses complement the methods and outcomes of service learning. In general, many programs expect the capstone course to allow students to learn to learn (Redmond, 1998), to solve problems and be self-directive (Holton III, 1999); service-learning projects can place students in a position where they have to determine what they need to know in order to complete the project. Many capstone courses expect the students to research, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and demonstrate what they have learned (Seiler, 1998); service-learning projects require students to use higher order thinking and to apply their knowledge to a real-world problem. Many capstone courses want their students to reflect on their college education and cope with the impending move toward their chosen career (Gardner and Van De Veer (1998); reflection is critical to service-learning (Morton, 1996), and service-learning projects, which make students complete a professional project, can help serve as a bridge to the work world. Many capstone courses want to ensure that their students are contextual thinkers (Gardner, 1998); service-learning projects, in their focus on applied problem-solving "makes them consider the context of a discipline and how its knowledge is used" (Enos and

Troppe, 1996, p. 156). Finally, many programs are using the capstone course for assessment purposes (Redmond, 1998; Schilling & Schilling, 1998); service-learning projects can serve as a vehicle for students to demonstrate what they have learned in a finished and documented product.

Therefore, our department offered a special topics course in the Fall 1999 semester as a pilot for the eventual required senior capstone. The author received a grant from the Nebraska Consortium for Service-learning in Higher Education which helped her develop the course.

The construction of the course.

This section will describe the major elements of a service-learning project and how they relate to our department's goals for our capstone course.

Focusing the class on one organization

The major organizing element of the course is focusing the students on one organization with which to do their service-learning projects. In our case, we are focusing on the after school youth program of one multi-issue non-profit.

This common focal point makes every student's project relevant to the other students, and therefore, allows for meaningful class discussions. In addition, that discussion creates an environment where multiple communication perspectives are heard and integrated. For instance, the first discussion of the class brought together

students majoring in organizational communication, public relations, journalism, interpersonal, and those who are undecided. The group generated a variety of possible interventions into the organization and also began to see how the different projects might relate to one another. As one of the goals for our capstone course is to help students integrate the various strands of the communication discipline, giving the students opportunities to discuss their different projects is a central component.

Theory and application

Another central component of the course is a review of various communication theories. One of the writing assignments requires the students to discuss how one theory informs their project. Again, this element accomplishes a number of goals. First, it helps students integrate the different communication sub-disciplines. By juxtaposing theories from interpersonal communication, organizational communication, journalism, and so forth, the students are given the opportunity to see how they relate to one another.

Second, it helps the students see how theory relates to practice. It is important to note that this course does not distinguish between undergraduates who are planning to go to graduate school and those who are planning on corporate employment. The point that we hope our students come to is that good theories work in the world and make communication intervention and research stronger and longer-lasting. We feel our undergraduates will be

better prepared for graduate school, as well as for a career in consulting or broadcast journalism, if they can understand the power of a strong theory and the different ways it may be applied.

Student-direction

The final major organizing element of the course is the self-direction given to the students. Research shows that an important function of the capstone course is to give the students a bridge into the working world (Holton III, 1998). One of the most troubling aspects for new graduates is the lack of direction in their jobs, compared to the detailed instructions they received in college (Holton III, 1998). Therefore, in our course, the students are required to do the following with a minimal amount of intervention from the instructor.

1) The students must figure out what the useful questions are regarding the organization/issue, and how to find those answers. As the instructor, I have given them basic information about the organization, how it formulates the issue (youths-at-risk), and what they are doing about it. It is up to the students, however, to ask further questions. For instance, the second day of class the students wondered how effective the organization is being in their implementation of their program. They have spent much of the semester finding the answer to this question.

2) Furthermore, a major task for the students is to figure out how their field of communication is relevant to the issue and organization. They begin the course by becoming familiar with the

organization, then write a paper discussing how their communication sub-discipline might inform the organization's construction of that issue.

3) As in a traditional research paper, they must decide what previous research is useful for their project. One written assignment asks them to review and discuss relevant research. They then have an opportunity to explore their findings with the rest of the class.

4) Finally, each student must conceptualize an appropriate project for the organization and complete it. They may do this individually or in groups, depending upon the project.

Student expectations for the capstone course.

The intent of this section is to evaluate and elaborate on the student perspective within the new service-learning capstone course offered by the communication department. I have attempted to cultivate and identify the initial perspective of the others in the class concerning its potential benefits, obstacles, and ultimate ability to meet the faculty's goals. I have integrated both my own views and those of my fellow students through personal contemplation and discussions with the students when the instructor was not in the room. Following are the results of my discussion with the other students based on a survey containing four questions.

1) What is the greatest benefit you personally expect from the completion of this course?

This question was met with optimism. Most of the students responded that they were eager to obtain a better grasp on the efficacy of their education or degree program through hands-on application. One responded that the opportunity this course offered him to actually apply his knowledge was his "dream come true". Another student stated that she was already benefitting from the team environment, listening to others generate ideas and having personal input that made a definite impression.

The students are, in general, hopeful and confident about the benefits they expect to gain from their participation in the class. I believe the entire class conveyed excitement to test their skills in a "real-life" situation. There were few doubts expressed about the value of such a course to the career success of the students.

My personal opinion fell closely in line with those of the rest of the class. Since the day I was informed of the existence of such a course I have been eagerly awaiting the chance to personally test my skills and assess my potential career success. After careful consideration, I do believe that many of us will benefit greatly from the chance to apply our accumulated knowledge, but I also think that we will most likely gain the most benefit from experiencing and overcoming the obstacles which will undoubtedly arise. I am a little nervous, I admit, about the possibility of finding that I am not proficient enough in my area of interest to produce a worthwhile outcome, but I am eager to determine that fact now, while I still have the possibility to improve myself or change my focus. In addition, I expect a large

amount of work to be generated through the process of this semester, perhaps more than we students realize or are accustomed to. Despite this challenge, I realize the class' relevance to my career and look forward to the experience.

2) What do you expect to find when attempting to integrate theory and practice?

This question was met with a little more skepticism and mixed feelings from the students. A few of them simply replied that they had no idea how the actual application of theory would turn out. Many of the students suggested that although they believed much of the communication theory appeared functional in the texts, they were doubtful about its success when applied to reality. There was a strong feeling that many of the theories we were familiar with would have to be bent, broken, molded, or adapted to achieve our goals. Some students expressed extreme frustration when speaking about reading additional theory in this class. "I'll be honest," said one student, "I hate reading theory. It's been drilled into me, and it's so repetitive. I want to get busy on the project." Another student suggested that seniors should have a good general theoretical knowledge by now, and that despite theory's value to our project, we should not waste time recapping theories we have already learned.

A couple of students felt differently about the utilization of theory in the class. One said, "I expect that applying theory will be a rather simple thing to do. Most theories must make sense; the hard part will be to get everyone to agree."

Generally, I believe the students were frustrated with the refocus on theory. They wanted to have possession of the knowledge necessary to succeed in this class, and felt restrained from getting started immediately.

Although this review of theory does seem a bit tedious, I am aware that it is necessary to re-establish this knowledge before we can successfully implement it in the class and in our careers. I am apprehensive about the attempt to use theory in these projects. Although I am eager to experiment with my knowledge of communication, I am anxious about the fact that I may find I don't have as much applicable information as I originally assumed. Hopefully, the ultimate outcome of this course will be my satisfaction in the worth of my education.

3) How much do you value the opportunity to observe the application of other disciplines within the communication field?

This question had mixed responses. "I value it very much," replied one student. "I am interested in seeing how various disciplines can be combined and applied toward a common goal." Another student suggested that she had viewed communication as a very general discipline until this class. Here, she was finally finding an area which she had true interest in. A few of the students indicated their realization that the more they knew about other fields of communication, the better chance they would have to succeed in their own field. One even mentioned that he was not sure that at this time he fully grasped this opportunity. He said that he found it interesting to observe people addressing problems

from the perspectives of different disciplines, and believed that this experience would enable him to look for solutions to problems from different angles or perspectives.

I believe the students value the opportunity to experience the mixture of disciplines within one framework, but I do agree that many of us may not fully appreciate this circumstance. We may not realize the benefits of drawing on each other's knowledge and collaborating until we have completed these projects or until we are further down our career paths. I do value the opportunity to receive suggestions from others with a different perspective on my discipline, and am pleased that my opinions are respected by those who focus on other areas of communication. I am also finding that we in the communication discipline rely on each other more than we realize. For instance, I am aware that my group's project dealing with staff training will not succeed unless the recruitment group is able to provided more bodies for us to train. We are truly codependent.

4) Generally, the purpose of a capstone course is to allow students to integrate diverse disciplines and deepen understanding of their own discipline. It should help them use their knowledge in context and increase problem-solving abilities, while encouraging them to reflect on their college education and how they will choose to focus it to reach their career goals. In your opinion, is a service-learning project the best way for students to experience a capstone course? Why?

Many of the students indicated their feelings of extreme satisfaction with the integration of a capstone focus and a service learning project. The value of hands-on experience to the learning process was reiterated. The possiblity for execution of knowledge excited many of the students. Also discussed was the opportunity to provide services to an organization which distinctly needed help and would force us to take these projects seriously.

I agreed with the majority of the students on the value of this course. I believe that this approach provides the students with an excellent opportunity to test their learned skills before graduation, and likewise, gives the faculty an accurate means of assessing what they have absorbed. I feel generally optimistic about the scope of this project and pride that the department trusts its students in such an undertaking.

What the course is becoming

Instructor's perspective

This course seems to have a life of its own, based on what type of projects the students create, and the issues they confront. The students have divided themselves into five groups: one is working on staff training, specifically conflict-resolution; one is working on staff recruitment and retention; one is creating a volunteer handbook manual; one is helping them with their public relations materials; and one is working on their marketing plan.

As of this writing (mid-semester), I am pleased with four developments. First, the students seem to be able to apply the

theories appropriately (after much classroom discussion). Second, they appear to be very interested in their own and each other's projects, taking the assignment very seriously. Third, they are using all of the communication skills we would expect from our graduates: small group work, public speaking, research, communication intervention.

Finally, it seems that they are making the bridge to their careers by learning how difficult it is to accomplish a task based on a real problem, as opposed to one fabricated by a text or in the classroom. The students are consistently expressing frustration with the chaotic nature of the organization, its apparent resistance to change, and the ambiguity of their projects. We spend a significant portion of class time talking about what people are seeing in the organization and what it means.

We are all dealing with ambiguity in this class. The students are struggling to focus on the process as well as the product, on the relationships they are creating, on listening and facilitating dialogue, and on asking questions, instead of giving answers. I am struggling with not knowing exactly what the students will need to learn. I do not have the semester planned out in detail, anticipating every class discussion; rather, I respond to the students' needs as they emerge. For example, I have brought in consultants to discuss their work and placed new readings on hold to encourage all of us to expand our base of knowledge.

We are in a place now, as I write this paper, where we are all teaching one another. I am not the expert in the class. We are

all trying to discover what we need to learn to understand and complete the projects. This is fun and different and exciting for me, though I am not sure how the students feel about it.

Students' perspectives

This section focuses on the student view of the course's process and progress. Again, the perspectives of the other students in the course were cultivated through a qualitative survey and a subsequent discussion without instructor supervision. The following includes the results of this survey and discussion, along with my personal views on the course's progression. It is organized around the five survey questions used.

1) Describe your general attitude toward this course. How is it going for you?

The majority of students repsonded that they were enjoying the course but confused a little as to the direction their specific projects were taking. Some were more confused than others, indicating that they were "floundering" or "struggling" to find a project that would effectively make use of their knowledge and still be beneficial to the non-profit organization. Others indicated they enjoyed the discussions and interactions more than working on their actual project, feeling they had latched on to some activity just for the sake of finding an avenue for their application of knowledge.

Although I enjoy the challenge of this course, I personally feel that the goals of this course may not coincide perfectly with

the goals we students have for our service to the organization. We are expected to produce something tangible as a means of demonstrating our knowledge and yet it seems that, in some cases, this is the opposite of what the organization needs. While some disciplines (i.e. public relations) are able to produce actual materials (brochures, etc.), other fields, such as my own in organizational communication, would be ignoring the real needs of this organization by simply providing a communication training program.

2) What specifically is frustrating you? What hindrances are you experiencing?

Many students replied they were frustrated with the lack of structure in the course and confused about the expectations held for them. "The lack of direction is frustrating me," said one student, "because every time it seems we finally have something going, some other road block surfaces." Another student was discouraged saying that although the instructor had indicated we would be expected to independently generate our projects, she was constantly redirecting our ideas. Others were disgruntled by the recap of theory. Many felt that the organization was too disorganized and unresponsive to allow our success. There was also more discussion about the pressure to "churn out a tangible product" for a grade.

These comments fell closely in line with my own frustrations. As the course progresses, I am finding that it is very difficult to channel my knowledge into some material format. This is bothering

me further as I learn more about the realm of consulting and that much of this field is about process and not product. My group's goal is to improve the communication patterns within the organization, and even if I produce a training manual, this will not embody the actual communication progress I stimulate within the organization.

3) What specifically are you enjoying? What is beneficial?

Many students indicated their satisfaction with the class discussion and the interest of the entire class in each individual project. Some replied that the chance to put their knowledge into practice was enlightening, (even if thus far only to identify challenges!). The freedom to design and work on a project was also listed as beneficial.

I am inspired by the insights I am gaining about the real potential the communication discipline has for improving organizational success. Previously, I had assumed that the application of basic communication skills through seminar illustrating "listening skills", "conflict management strategies", etc. would improve general organizational prosperity. Now I am excited by the challenge of generating responsive solutions that will accurately address real issues. I am falling in love with my major all over again.

4) Do you still believe in the usefulness of this course as preparation for the transition from education to career? Why or why not?

As one student put it, "...how can more knowledge and education and experience be anything but helpful?" Many students agreed, adding comments about the increased benefits that more structure would provide. A few students suggested that the relevance of the course was more beneficial to certain majors than others (i.e. majors geared toward direct interaction with organizations). As mentioned previously, some students felt that their choice of a project was not associated with their major but with the need for direction, providing them with little applicable experience in their field.

For me, this course has proven invaluable. It has further prepared me for my career by redirecting my goals for improving communication within an organization utilizing responsive, reflective means. I do feel, however, that this course has evolved to emphasize consulting work in which some fields of communication may not apply. In addition, I would interpret the most beneficial aspect of this course not to be the actual application of my theoretical knowledge, but to involve my own realizations about the information and experience which I still must acquire in order to succeed.

5) How effective is this type of course for assessing your skills? Will its end result effectively demonstrate your knowledge and abilities to the faculty? Why or why not?

Only one student maintained that this course would provide an accurate assessment of her skills. Some students were hopeful about the ability of this course to measure what they had learned.

but more were skeptical. Many students expressed frustration with the fact that the tangible product alone could not correctly depict their application of knowledge, and therefore, could not be a measure of their base of knowledge nor their ability to make use of it. One student went so far as to say that although his particular project might effectively demonstrate his abilities to the faculty, his idea of service learning involved helping to better an agency using communication-related means, not having a professor pronounce him worthy of a good grade.

I agree with several of the students that the products of this experience are not entirely tangible, and as a result, our material "projects" alone will not provide an accurate measure of our development. However, it is not my intent to suggest that this class is not valuable for other means. For me, this class was the most directly beneficial to my career goals of any class in the department, as it provided me with new insight and actual relevant experience. I am simply doubtful that will be useful as an accurate assessment tool, as long as the focus is on the actual product or project. If, however, we were asked to write about our experiences with the project, others may be able to pull a more accurate description of our knowledge and skills.

V. Tentative conclusions

While I am generally pleased with how the students are reacting to the course and feel that we are accomplishing some of the goals of the capstone (giving the students an opportunity to

apply their education, providing a mechanism to assess our students' abilities, helping them understand their career choices), there are also some goals that are not being fulfilled. Because no broadcast, journalism, or rhetoric students enrolled, there is not as broad of an overview of the communication field as we had hoped for. Additionally, since the design of this course, a department faculty meeting was held where there was general (though not universal) agreement that one capstone course for all the majors was not desirable. Rather, most of the faculty wanted a number of capstone options (i.e. one for broadcasting, one for public relations, one for speech communication, etc.).

Similarly, there is not as much opportunity for integrating the communication field. The free-wheeling, broad-based discussions I had anticipated are not occurring. One way to encourage this may be to focus the students on fewer, broader theories, (i.e. social constructionism, coordinated management of meaning, and systems theory, for example) instead of eight different theories.

As I said above, the course feels like it has a life of its own. The major tension in the course, and therefore, where it is finding its most energy, is around the issues the consulting-focused students are dealing with (staff training and recruitment). These are also the students who are the interpersonal and organizational communication majors. They have very different and more complex issues from those students who are focusing on more product-oriented projects (marketing, public relations, employee

handbook). The consulting students, especially, need more assignments and readings that help them learn and practice their observation and listening skills. They also need to learn how to build a relationship with an organization. It may be that this course is reformulated as a capstone experience on organizational consulting for our speech communication majors.

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Appendix

SPEECH 3600
SPECIAL TOPIC--COMMUNICATION SENIOR SEMINAR

Instructor: Hollis F. Glaser, Ph.D.
Office: ASH 309G, 554-4846
Hours: Tu-Thur 10:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m.; 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.
Text: Reading packet on reserve in the library

Course: This is an upper-level course for majors in communication. The field of communication is a broad one moving in many directions, including interpersonal, organizational, rhetoric, public relations, advertising, broadcasting, and news writing. However, there is also an underlying unity within the field which is often lost when students are focusing on only one aspect of it, as many of you have been doing in your major. Two goals of this course are to help students integrate the various strands of the communication field, and explore the applications of your own sub-discipline in some depth.

The way we are going to do this is by looking together at one particular social issue as defined and embodied by a local non-profit organization. We will try to understand through our various communication lenses, if you will, the dynamics of this issue and how practitioners of communication might inform or intervene in its construction.

The issue we are focusing on this semester is urban youth-at-risk in general, and more specifically, ways to prevent youths from joining gangs. The organization we will be studying is Social Settlement, a non-profit organization in south Omaha. Your main job this semester is to figure out how your communication major applies to this issue and to create a final product which can be used either by the organization or by others interested in this issue.

The first three weeks of the semester will be orienting you to the issue and Social Settlement. We will be reading literature created by Social Settlement and also literature they cite as justification for their program on youths at risk. We will also be interviewing the director of Social Settlement and visiting their building. Your first paper is due at the end of this section.

The next four weeks of the semester we will be reading and discussing relevant communication theories from all of the sub-disciplines. The first week will be interpersonal theories, the second week, organizational theories, the third week, persuasive theories, and the last week mass communication theories. Everyone will be reading all of the theories. However, those of you who are majors in a particular discipline will be expected to have questions prepared for readings in your area. The second paper is

due after this section where you finalize your project (though it is very possible that you will have already decided upon it earlier in the semester).

The eighth week will be concerned with understanding how to apply communication theories to real world settings and problems. The next four weeks will be student run. During this time you will be expected to engage in three activities:
1) find relevant communication articles and/or studies which inform your project;
2) summarize and share those findings with the rest of the class;
3) work with your partner or groups on the project.

The last two weeks of the course you will be presenting your projects to the rest of the class and to Social Settlement.

Class participation: The point of this class is to give you an opportunity to understand how the communication discipline works in the world. As such, you are expected to grapple with this issue in class, to discuss it with one another, and to come to some understandings together. This cannot be done alone. Therefore, a portion of your grade will be based on how well you prepare for those classes where you are expected to have questions ready and where you will be presenting material. In addition, you are allowed two absences. You need not tell me why you are absent; I trust that you have your own good reasons for organizing your time as you do. However, because so much of your education in this course occurs during class time, every absence after those two will result in a deduction of two points out of 100 point scale at the end of the semester.

Grading:

First Paper:	10%
Second Paper:	10%
Third Paper:	15%
Fourth Paper:	15%
Project:	40%
Class participation:	10%

98-100=A+
90-97=A
87-89=B+
80-86=B
77-79=C+
70-76=C
67-69=D+
60-66=D
59 and below=F

Assignments:

First paper: After reading basic research about urban youths in the United States, Omaha, and Social Settlement's efforts, discuss what your communication sub-discipline has to offer to this issue. What does your discipline have to say that those working in the field need to know? What communication perspective sheds new light on this issue? (10%)

Second paper: At this point, you are familiar with some research on helping urban youths and have familiarized yourself with relevant communication theories. Identify the project you wish to work on. It might be interventionist or reflective. That is, depending on your communication discipline, it might be immediately applicable to social settlement, or it might offer them a broader perspective. Either way, after explaining your project, discuss which communication theory is most relevant for helping you attain your goals. Explain why you chose that theory and how it will inform your project. (10%)

Third paper: Review the communication literature that relates to your project. Find research that gives you important information about your project. Summarize it, explain what you've learned from it, and how you plan to use the research in your project. (15%)

Final paper: (Due during finals week) Reflect on the capstone course and your undergraduate communication curriculum. Discuss what is common among the different communication disciplines and how the field of communication contributes to contemporary social, educational, or business issues. More specifically, what have you learned in your experience with Social Settlement? (15%)

Final project: The final project will be individually determined in consultation with the course instructor. It will be expected that the projects reflect the students' sub-discipline and respond to the social issue (urban youths at risk) discussed throughout the semester. Students may work on the project individually or in teams, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. The project may be an interventionist approach to the issue (i.e. a training program, or a public relations program), or it may be reflective (i.e. a journalistic piece or a traditional term paper). (40%)

As mentioned above, one of the points of this course is to help you understand how your education can be applied to current issues in society and the local community. After understanding the issue of youths at risk and the way Social Settlement approaches it, you will come up with a project that somehow either informs this issue or intervenes in it, depending on your major.

For instance, if you are in interpersonal communication, you might come up with a training program to help the staff be more effective with youths. If you are in organizational communication, you might

study the way their organization operates and help them understand the dynamics. Alternatively, you may be in rhetoric or journalism, in which case you might want to take a broader view of the issue or the neighborhood and create a more reflective project which might help Social Settlement or policy makers be more effective in their implementation of different programs.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is our intended schedule for readings and discussion. You are expected to have the assignment read and prepared on the day it is listed. As the semester moves along, the schedule may change. It is your responsibility to keep track of any changes and adjust accordingly.

8/24 Introduction to course and service learning
8/26 Introduction to Social Settlement
Readings:
1) Social Settlement's yearly report.
2) strategic plan from the UNO school of social work.
3) Proposal for board of directors from UNO school of social work.

8/31 Social Settlement literature--what they are reading
Readings:
1) Heng, M. A. (1996). Teens and violence: Cracking the issue. Kids Magazine for Heartland Parents, 8, 14-21.
2) Huff, R. & and Trump, K. S. (1996). Youth violence and gangs. Education and Urban Society, 28, 492-504.
9/2 Interview Renee Franklin, director of Social Settlement

9/7 **First Paper Due**
9/9 Visit Social Settlement

9/14 Coordinated Management of Meaning
Reading: Griffin, E. (1997). A first look at communication theory. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies. (Chapter 6--pp. 69-82)
9/16 Interactional Theory
Reading: Griffin, E. (1997). A first look at communication theory. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies. (Chapter 13--pp. 167-178).

9/21 Organizational Culture
Reading: Morgan, G. (1986). Images of Organization. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (Chapter 5--"Creating Social Reality")
9/23 Organizational Power
Reading: Morgan, G. (1986). Images of Organization. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (Chapter 6--"Interests, Conflicts, and Power")

9/28 Cognitive Dissonance
Reading: O'Keefe, D. (1990). Persuasion: Theory and research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (Chapter 4--"Cognitive Dissonance Theory").
9/30 Motivation Theory
Reading: Cooper, M. D. & Nothstine, W. L. Power persuasion: Moving an ancient art into the media age. Greenwood, IN: Educational Video Group. (Chapter 4--"Motivation Theory and the Passions").

10/5 Critical Media Theory
Reading: Griffin, E. (1997). A first look at communication theory. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies. (Chapter 28--363-373).
10/7 Public Journalism
Reading: Schudson, M. (1998). "The public journalism movement and its problems," in Graber, D., McQuail, D., & Norris, P. (Eds.) The politics of news and the news of politics. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. (pp. 132-149).

10/12 **Second Paper Due**
10/14 Theory and Application
Reading:
1) Miller, G. R. & Sunnafrank, M. J. (1984). Theoretical dimensions of applied communication research. The Quarterly Journal of Speech. 70, 255-263.
2) O'Hair, D. & Kreps, G. L. (1990). Conceptual issues in O'Hair, D. & Kreps, G. L. (Eds.). Applied Communication Theory and Research. Hillsdale, N.J.: Larence Erlbaum Associates.

10/19 FALL BREAK
10/21 Organize the rest of the semester--students will be working with their partners or in their groups, updating one another on their projects, and summarizing the relevant literature.

10/26
10/28

11/2
11/4 NCA

11/9
11/11

11/16
11/18

11/23 **Third paper due**
11/25 THANKSGIVING

11/30 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
12/2 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

12/7 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
12/9 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Final paper due: Tuesday, December 14th, 11:30 a.m.